

December 2012 Newsletter



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Dear Resident,

I am writing to share with you my December, 2012 newsletter. In the last fiscal year, we have achieved great financial and environmental efficiency, exceeding our goal of reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions by 20%, and have reduced overall energy consumption by 24%, saving approximately \$2.1 million in avoided utility charges in just one year; earlier this week, the Board of Aldermen unanimously approved the override package I presented in October to go before the voters in a special election on March 12th. This package will address Newton's critical needs in education, public safety, infrastructure and roads and sidewalks. Next week, we continue our series of Town Hall meetings on the override to answer questions directly from residents; I am pleased to participate in the Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce's Cash Mob series part of an ongoing effort to support local businesses; and lastly, this month's newsletter contains a special message from Superintendent David Fleishman. I hope you will take a moment to read more about each of these items.

Thank you,



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

Major Strides Made in Energy Efficiency and Cost Savings

Since taking office, I have worked hard to find efficiency and savings in every area of government. We have taken tremendous strides to be energy efficient, saving money while also helping the environment.



Recently we submitted our annual Green Community Report to the Department of Energy Resources (DOER.) This reports indicates for the last fiscal year, the City of Newton has exceeded its goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20%. We also reduced overall energy consumption by 24%, and saved approximately \$2.1 million in avoided utility charges.

In addition, the report highlights work completed at the Lower Falls Community Center, which is expected to lead to energy consumption savings exceeding 75% from the baseline; the city's commitment of up to \$4.5 million over the next three years toward energy efficiency projects through the Mass Save program, planned installation of approximately 700kW in solar panels on four school buildings, and purchase of 100% green power through June of 2015 for all city buildings.

This outstanding success is a continuation of the great work that we have done to achieve energy efficiency, to be environmentally smart, and to save money. The Energy Smart Newton program, which was launched earlier this year, takes a three-pronged approach to reducing energy consumption by 20% by the year 2020 in the municipal, commercial, and residential sectors. To learn more, and to see how you can help do your part, please visit the [Energy Smart Newton homepage](#).

Board of Aldermen Approves Placing Override Package on Ballot, Unanimously by Vote of 23-0

When I was inaugurated as your mayor nearly three years ago, I promised you that together we would restore confidence and build a positive future. I am both happy and proud to tell you that since then, we have broken Newton's gridlock and completely reversed our financial trajectory. By rewriting our health care and compensation plans, we were able to sign contracts with both our municipal and teachers' unions that did not exceed revenue growth, that will save the city \$178 million over the next five years. We also put in place fundamental budget, performance management, and risk-based capital planning processes that save taxpayers millions of dollars a year. Zero-basing our budgets has saved the city \$15 million over the past three years.

But our work does not stop here. That is why in October, I presented my plan to address Newton's critical needs in education, infrastructure and public safety. My plan calls for a package of Proposition 2 ½ overrides that would help the city rehabilitate our crumbling school buildings, alleviate the pressures of enrollment growth in our schools, improve public safety in our community, and address badly needed repairs to our streets and sidewalks.

On Monday, the Board of Aldermen voted unanimously, 23-0, to place the override package on the ballot in a special election to be held on March 12th, 2013. To more about their vote, please click here for recent stories from the Boston Globe and Newton Tab.

A critical component of this plan is reaching out directly to residents to answer any questions that they may have about this proposal. That is why I am hosting a series of Town Hall meetings across the city, where I will be joined by Superintendent of Schools David Fleishman, CFO Maureen Lemieux, COO Bob Rooney, Interim Chief of Police Howard Mintz, and Fire Chief Bruce Proia.

The next in the series of Town Halls will take place this Thursday, **December 13th at 7pm at the Angier Elementary School Library**, located at 1697 Beacon Street. I encourage you to join me there to learn more, and ask any questions that you may have. Additional Town Hall

meetings across the city will be scheduled following the New Year.

To learn more about the override, and to utilize our online calculator to determine its impact on you, please visit the override section of the city website by clicking [here](#).

Supporting Local Businesses

As part of my ongoing commitment to foster and maintain a thriving business community here in Newton, last month, I was pleased to participate in the [Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce's](#) first in a series of Cash Mob events in Auburndale. The event brought residents from across Newton to Auburndale's village center, where everyone committed to spending \$10 at one of the local businesses. Also as part of the event, participants were encouraged to sign the Chamber's [Shop Local pledge](#), which asks individuals to commit to shifting at least three purchases that they planned to make online or out of town this holiday season and shop locally instead. I was happy to sign the pledge, and hope that you will too, in an effort to help support our local businesses.



Mayor Warren joins Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce President Greg Reibman in signing the Shop Local pledge at the Auburndale Cash Mob. (Photo courtesy of Alexi Reibman)

The second Cash Mob will take place in West Newton tomorrow. For more details, please [click here](#). A third Cash Mob event will take place in Newton Highlands on Friday, December 14th at 6:15pm.

A Message from Superintendent David Fleishman



Newton's Kindergarten at Record Levels

Dear Community Members,

The 2012-2013 school year is off to a very good start. We welcomed 936 new kindergarten students to Newton Public Schools this year, an increase of 41 students over last year. This is the third year in a row that kindergarten enrollment has set a new high, reaching levels we have not seen since the 1970's. In addition, this year's increase of 250 students represents an overall growth rate of over 2%, an annual rate of change that has not been seen in Newton since the early 1990's.

It is a positive indicator for a city to expand enrollment growth as Newton continues to be a desirable place for families to educate their children. Given the growth in our system, it is critical that we have both the space and up-to-date facilities to serve our children. It is a real pleasure to work with Mayor Warren and his team as we strive to enhance the learning environments for our growing student population.

As a superintendent, my job is to preserve and build upon the many qualities of our schools that serve our students well and ensure that our improvement efforts are strategic, thoughtful and realistic. Schools that embrace the value of academic excellence are actively engaged in a process of continual improvement and I am excited about the promising initiatives we have taking place in our system.

We have established a District News section on our homepage (www.newton.k12.ma.us) to keep you up-to-date on what's happening in and around the Newton Public Schools. We look forward to providing other updates in this newsletter throughout the year.

Sincerely,

David Fleishman
Superintendent of Schools